

BEST SHOW OF THE SEASON

By "CHILTERN"

Tooting and Mitcham 2, Wycombe Wanderers 5.

WHAT a worthwhile trip this must have been for the coachload of Wycombe fans who travelled to Tooting on Saturday. Before the kick-off Tooting were above Wanderers in the league race and favourites to win in front of their own crowd. But 100 minutes, seven goals and three penalties later they were wondering what had hit them.

For Wycombe turned on their best performance of the season to outplay the Londoners in every department of the game. And apart from scoring five times, they missed a penalty, had a "goal" disallowed, and hit the cross-bar twice.

Thanks to solidarity in defence, the forwards were able to concentrate on attacking. As a result Tooting's defence had an unhappy afternoon, and even England centre-half John Robertson was unable to rally his colleagues to quell Wycombe's busy attacks.

The game was played at a cracking pace throughout and despite the glut of penalties, was never dirty. Both sides were keen to play fast direct football.

PENALTY MISS

After Bates had missed a 14th minute penalty by placing the ball too softly and allowing Guy time to dive at it, Samuels put Wycombe ahead with a scrambled effort which went in off Robertson's leg.

The game continued at a searing pace until Flood equalised three minutes before half-time only for Gale to restore Wycombe's lead with a hard-shot from the edge of the penalty box.

One reason for Wycombe's success was their ability to cash in on defensive errors which they harried Tooting into making. And I think it's right to say that Wycombe had any luck that was going regarding referee's decisions.

In the 53rd minute Les Merrick, who had a great game, banged

in his first league goal of the season after moving into position to collect a well-placed Worley centre. And seven minutes later he almost got his second, but Guy pulled off a brilliant diving save.

Holder narrowed the gap for Tooting with the game's second penalty after Rundle had shoyed Johnson off the ball, but with Wycombe's half-backs and inside-forwards covering well, and Bates swopping positions brilliantly with both wingers, it was always on the cards that Wanderers would win. Though Tooting showed a good deal of fight at this stage.

Horseman scored the goal of the match in the 83rd minute, breaking away from the halfway mark he left Robertson and his men behind, drew the goalkeeper out and scored with a hard shot from the narrowest of angles. Robertson was hurt trying to stop him and had to leave the field with a pulled hamstring.

A minute from time Bates made amends for his earlier lapse from the spot when he had a second chance after being upended, to round off Wycombe's best win of the season to date.

Wycombe—Maskell; Beck, Roystone; Baker, Rundle, Gale; Worley, Samuels, Bates, Horseman, Merrick. Substitute, Priestley.